



MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Matt Jesick, Case Manager
JL Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review

DATE: March 24, 2015

SUBJECT: BZA #18964 – 1220 Potomac Avenue, SE

I. RECOMMENDATION

With regard to this proposal to construct a new apartment building, the Office of Planning (OP) **recommends approval** of the following relief:

- § 2101 Parking (4 required, 1 existing, 0 proposed).

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

| | |
|--|--|
| Address | 1220 Potomac Avenue, SE |
| Legal Description | Square 1021, Lot 40 |
| Ward and ANC | 6, 6B |
| Lot Characteristics and Existing Development | The lot is a highly irregular through lot with a wide 40' frontage on Potomac Avenue and a narrow, 12' frontage on Eye Street. The lot is currently improved with a single family detached dwelling. |
| Zoning | R-5-B, which permits multi-family buildings |
| Historic District | Capitol Hill Historic District |
| Adjacent Properties | Rowhouses and semi-detached units to the west and north |
| Surrounding Neighborhood Character | Mostly residential; Mix of rowhouses and moderate to medium density apartments |

III. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

The applicant seeks parking relief in order to construct an eight-unit apartment building.

IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS AND REQUESTED RELIEF

The site is zoned R-5-B (Moderate Density Apartments), and the proposed use is a matter-of-right use in the zone. The applicant is seeking relief to provide zero parking spaces where four are required. The parking requirement is presented in the table below.

| Item | Requirement | Existing | Proposed | Relief |
|------------------|--|----------|----------|-----------|
| Parking (§ 2101) | 1 per 2 units (8 units => 4 spaces) | 1 | 0 | Requested |



V. ANALYSIS

In order to be granted a variance, the applicant must show that they meet the three part test described in § 3103.

1. Exceptional Situation Resulting in a Practical Difficulty

The subject site has frontage on both Potomac Avenue and Eye Street, but it is unlikely that a curb cut would be approved for either street. With the establishment of a new use, the Public Space Committee would likely not permit the existing curb cut to be used. In addition, the HPRB, in its review of the project, indicated that it would not permit parking access from either street. The applicant, therefore, cannot provide parking on site.

2. No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good

There would likely be no substantial detriment to the public good. It is possible that the residents of the proposed dwelling units would own vehicles, but the addition of a small number of vehicles parking on the street would not appreciably detract from the parking supply. The closure of the existing curb cut would add to the publicly available parking. Because the site is close to many bus lines and the Potomac Avenue metro station, it reduces the likelihood of residents owning vehicles. Furthermore, should a curb cut be provided on the very narrow portion of the lot abutting Eye Street, not only would it take away street parking for a single on-lot space, the parking could present mild impacts to the immediately abutting neighbors.



The narrow, fenced gap between the two houses is the Eye Street frontage for the subject property.

3. No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations

Granting the requested relief would not impair the integrity of the Regulations. While the Regulations generally intend to provide on-site parking for any given use, they do not intend to override other important city policies such as historic preservation, provision of public parking, and maintenance of a consistent streetscape for the ease of pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular travel. The Regulations also do not intend to remove the ability to use a property; Even if a curb cut were approved, providing four on-site parking spaces would use a significant portion of the buildable area of the site.

VI. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

As of this writing the Office of Planning has not received any comments from the community related to the requested parking relief.